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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
INR-07 NSAE-00 ACDA-07 IO-13 EUR-12 MC-02 L-03
AID-05 IGA-02 USIA-06 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00 COME-00
DHA-02 ARAE-00 H-01 STR-04 ERDA-05 ERDE-00 OES-06
FEA-01 SAB-02 PA-01 PRS-01 /126 W

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P R 111139Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9924
INFO ASD ISA WASHDC
US DELEGATION INTER-AMERICAN DEFENSE BOARD (JCS) WASHDC
DIA WASH DC

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(☒) Release (☐) Excise (☐) Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: (☐) In Part (☒) In Full

(☐) Classify as ☐ (☐) Extend as ☐ (☐) Down

Date _____ Declassify on _____ R

[REDACTED] SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 2595

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OTRA, AR

SUBJECT: VISIT TO ARGENTINA OF LTG GORDON SUMNER, CHAIRMAN, INTER-AMERICAN DEFENSE BOARD (IADB)

1. SUMMARY: LTG SUMNER, IN HIS CAPACITY AS CHAIRMAN OF THE INTER-AMERICAN DEFENSE BOARD, VISITED ARGENTINA AS AN OFFICIAL GUEST OF THE GOA FROM 3 TO 11 APRIL. HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY MRS SUMNER AND HIS AIDE, MAJOR JULES DUBOIS, USAF. THE FIRST PART OF THE VISIT (3-6 APRIL) WAS DEVOTED TO MEETING WITH ARGENTINE AND US OFFICIALS; THE REMAINDER (7 TO 11 APR) CONSISTED OF AN ORIENTATION TOUR OF SOUTHERN ARGENTINA. DURING HIS STAY IN ARGENTINA, GENERAL SUMNER MET WITH THE THREE MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY JUNTA, THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE, THE MINISTER OF PLANNING, THE CHIEFS OF STAFF OF THE THREE ARMED FORCES, AND THE CHIEF OF THE JOINT STAFF. HE ALSO ATTENDED A MEETING OF THE COUNTRY TEAM AND WAS THE GUEST OF AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRESIDENT ALEX PERRY AT A LUNCHEON MEETING OF THE CHAMBER.

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(2) ON THE SUBJECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS, ALL ARGENTINES PRESENT WERE UNITED IN EXPRESSING THEIR DISAPPOINTMENT THAT RELATIONS WITH THE US HAD SUFFERED RECENTLY. THEY WERE EQUALLY UNITED, HOWEVER, IN POINTING OUT THAT THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT, HAVING RESPONSIBILITY FOR SECURITY OF ALL ARGENTINE CITIZENS, HAD NO OTHER CHOICE THAN TO CONTINUE THE VIGOROUS EXECUTION OF THE WAR AGAINST SUBVERSION TO RETURN PEACE AND TRANQUILITY TO THE COUNTRY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

(3) LTG SUMNER RESPONDED THAT AS A SOLDIER HE COULD UNDERSTAND THE CONCEPT THAT THE GOA WAS AT WAR, BUT THAT UNFORTUNATELY, IT WAS NOT GENERALLY UNDERSTOOD OUTSIDE ARGENTINA. HE WENT ON TO WARN THAT IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO UNDERESTIMATE THE IMPORTANCE WHICH THE PRESENT US ADMINISTRATION ATTACHES TO THE OBSERVANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS, AND TO EXPECT THE EMPHASIS TO DISAPPEAR IN THE SHORT TERM. THEN, TURNING TO MILITARY RELATIONS, HE POINTED OUT THAT, AT THIS TIME, WHEN THE TREND IS TOWARD THE REDUCTION OF BILATERAL US MILITARY RELATIONS WITH LATIN AMERICAN NEIGHBORS, MULTILATERAL RELATIONS THROUGH THE INTER-AMERICAN DEFENSE BOARD TAKE ON A GREATER IMPORTANCE. AS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, HE CONGRATULATED THOSE PRESENT ON THE EXTREMELY HIGH QUALITY OF ARGENTINE OFFICERS SELECTED TO SERVE ON THE BOARD AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT ARGENTINA WOULD CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE IADB AS A NECESSARY AND USEFUL FORUM FOR PRESERVING THE SECURITY OF THE HEMISPHERE.

(4) AS THE LUNCHEON ENDED, BRIGADIER KLIX RECOMMENDED THAT GENERAL SUMNER ALSO MEET WITH US BUSINESSMEN IN ARGENTINA TO HEAR THEIR VIEWS. (GENERAL SUMNER ATTENDED US CHAMBER OF COMMERCE LUNCHEON ON 6 APRIL).

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B. MEETING ON 5 APRIL (0900-1100 HOURS) WITH REAR ADMIRAL TORTI, CHIEF OF JOINT STAFF. SINCE THE CHIEF OF THE ARGENTINE DELEGATION TO THE IADB REPORTS TO HIS GOVERNMENT THROUGH ADMIRAL TORTI AND THE JOINT STAFF, THE MEETING PROVIDED AN OPPRTUNITY FOR DIRECT DISCUSSION BETWEEN GENERAL SUMNER AND ADMIRAL TORTI CONCERNING ONGOING PROJECTS OF THE IADB AND POSSIBLE FUTURE INITIATIVES. IT ALSO PERMITTED PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION ON TOPICS WHICH MIGHT BE BROUGHT UP LATER AT THE LUNCHEON WITH THE JUNTA MEMBERS. C. LUNCHEON ON 5 APRIL WITH MILITARY JUNTA ABOARD PRESIDENTIAL YACHT. THIS MEETING WAS CHARACTERIZED BY EXTREMELY TIGHT SECURITY MEASURES TO INCLUDE WITHHOLDING THE EXACT TIME AND PLACE OF EMBARKATION UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE. WHEN GENERAL AND MRS SUMNER, MAJOR DUBOIS AND BRIGADIER GENERAL AND MRS BAYON BOARDED THE YACHT, ADMIRAL AND MRS MASSERA, BRIGADIER AND MRS AGOSTI, AND ADMIRAL AND MRS TORTI WERE ALREADY ABOARD.

(1) AFTER BRIEF GREETINGS, ADMIRAL MASSERA AND BRIGADIER AGOSTI LAUNCHED INTO A DISCUSSION OF US HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY AND ITS IMPACT ON ARGENTINA. GENERAL SUMNER RESPONDED THAT MANY RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF STATE AND

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DEFENSE, AS WELL AS IN THE CONGRESS, ARE CONCERNED THAT THE US SHOULD NOT FORESAKE ITS FRIENDS BY INDISCRIMINATE APPLICATION OF SANCTIONS. NEVERTHELESS, WHILE METHODS OF CARRYING OUT THE POLICY MAY CHANGE, IT IS CLEAR THAT HUMAN RIGHTS WILL BE THE BASIC THRUST IN US FOREIGN POLICY FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

(2) AFTER THIS BRIEF EXCHANGE WITH MASSERA AND AGOSTI, PRESIDENT AND MRS VIDELA BOARDED THE YACHT. ONCE INITIAL

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GREETINGS WERE OVER, THE PRESIDENT TOOK GENERAL SUMNER ASIDE TO TALK PRIVATELY. HE DISCUSSED THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE VERY CALMLY AND APPEARED TO BE RESIGNED TO NOT BEING ABLE TO DO MUCH ABOUT IT. HIS ATTITUDE SEEMED TO BE ONE OF A PERSON WHO FEELS HE HAS BEEN HURT BY AN OLD FRIEND, BUT NOT ENOUGH TO FORESAKE THE FRIENDSHIP. GENERAL VIDELA THEN TOUCHED ON A NUMBER OF OTHER SUBJECTS. HE SPOKE OF THE COMMON PROBLEMS OF THE SOUTHERN CONCE COUNTRIES WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON CHILE URUGUAY AND THE NEED FOR COOPERATION. HE EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER A CONTINUING HEAVY NEGATIVE BALANCE OF ARGENTINE TRADE WITH THE US. REFERRING TO FUTURE ENERGY NEEDS, VIDELA SAID THAT ARGENTINA WOULD MOVE AHEAD WITH ITS NUCLEAR ENERGY PLANS. IN ORDER TO DO THIS, ASSISTANCE FROM THE US OR SOME OTHER COUNTRY WOULD BE NECESSARY IN THE HEAVY WATER STAGE. HE ADDED THAT ARGENTINA CANNOT AGREE TO A NONPROLIFERATION TREATY WHICH IS PREJUDICIAL TO THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE ENERGY NEEDS AND IN WHICH THE COUNTRY VOLUNTARILY ASSUMES A "SECOND-RATE" STATUS. ON PANAMA CANAL NEGOTIATIONS VIDELA EXPRESSED MILD INTEREST, BUT MADE NO COMMENT.

(3) CONVERSATION OVER LUNCH CONSISTED PRIMARILY OF AN EXCHANGE OF IDEAS RELATING TO A STRATEGIC OVERVIEW OF THE WORLD WITH EMPHASIS ON THE THREAT AS PERCEIVED BY THE ARGENTINES AND BY THE INTER-AMERICAN DEFENSE BOARD. THE SITUATION IN PERU WAS STRESSED, ESPECIALLY BY MASSERA AND AGOSTI, THEY POINTED OUT THAT PRESIDENT MORALES BERMUDEZ IS DETERMINED TO BRING THE POLICIES BACK TOWARD THE RIGHT, BUT THAT HE MUST PROCEED SLOWLY SINCE THERE ARE STRONG LEFTIST ELEMENTS STILL IN THE

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GOVERNMENT. THEY INDICATED THAT ARGENTINA WOULD SHOW PATIENCE WITH THE PERUVIANS AND HOPED THAT THE US WOULD AS WELL.

(4) AS AN ASIDE, AT ONE POINT GENERAL SUMNER ASKED THE THREE ASSEMBLED JUNTA MEMBERS IF THERE WAS ANY SUBSTANCE TO RECENT NEWS REPORTS THAT THE JUNTA WAS LOOKING FOR A FOURTH MAN TO ASSUME THE PRESIDENT IN THE NEXT PHASE OF THE NATIONAL REORGANIZATION, AND ADDED THAT OAS AMBASSADOR ORFILE HAD BEEN MENTIONED AS A POSSIBILITY. THE JUNTA SEEMED SURPRISED BY THE QUESTION. AFTER EXCHANGING KNOWING GLANCES THEY ASSURED GENERAL SUMNER THAT THERE WAS NO PLAN TO CHANGE THE STRUCTURE OF THE GOVERNMENT.

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D. MEETING ON 6 APRIL (1030-1130 HOURS) WITH PLANNING MINISTER MAJOR GENERAL DIAZ BESSONE. THIS MEETING WAS ARRANGED AT THE REQUEST OF THE PLANNING MINISTER FOR THE PURPOSE OF EXCHANGING IDEAS ON THE WORLD SITUATION. DURING THE MEETING THE PLANNING MINISTER PROVIDED GENERAL SUMNER WITH ESSENTIALLY THE SAME BRIEFING WHICH HE PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED TO AMBASSADOR (BA 7308). THE MINISTER'S MID-APRIL VISIT TO THE UNITED NATIONS IN NEW YORK WAS ALSO DISCUSSED.

3. COMMENT: GENERAL SUMNER OBSERVED THAT ALL THREE JUNTA MEMBERS APPEAR TO BE IN GOOD HEALTH. VIDELA WAS ALERT, APPARENTLY NOT OVERLY PREOCCUPIED WITH OTHER CARES OF HIS OFFICE, BUT RELUCTANT TO ENGAGE IN SMALL TALK. MASSERA WAS CHARMING, VERY QUICK, AND WAS BOTH SKILLFUL AND DIPLOMATIC IN HIS CONVERSATIONS. AGOSTI WAS CONGENIAL, MORE INFORMAL THAN THE OTHERS, AND SEEMED BY BE TRYING TO PROVIDE A COMMUNICATIONS BRIDGE BETWEEN THE OTHER TWO JUNTA MEMBERS. AS AN OVERALL IMPRESSION FROM HIS CONTACTS WITH THE JUNTA AND OTHER RANKING OFFICIALS, GENERAL SUMNER DETECTED A STRONG DESIRE FOR UNDERSTANDING FROM THE US AND A SENSE OF FRUSTRATION AND CONFUSION AS TO WHY THE US, WHOM THEY REGARD AS THE LEADER OF THE FREE WORLD, DOES NOT OPENLY APPLAUD ARGENTINA'S EFFORTS AGAINST MARXIST EXPANSION. IT WAS EQUALLY CLEAR, THAT THE

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GOA IS DETERMINED TO CONTINUE ITS FIGHT AGAINST SUBVERSION WITH OR WITHOUT US SUPPORT.
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